Aoi Tori no Shinwa

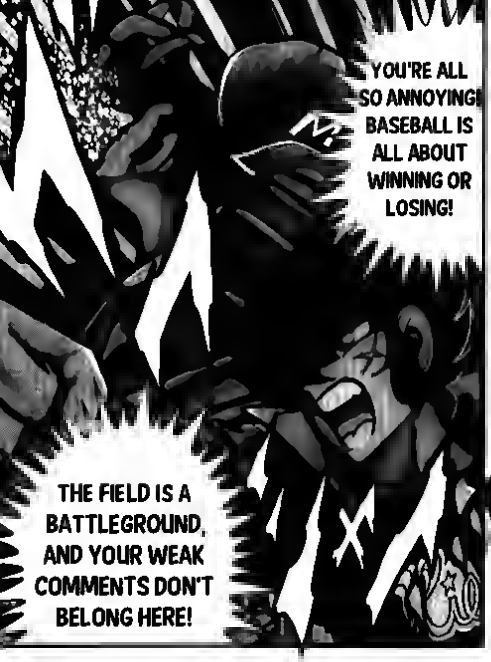
Chapter 02

Typesetting: Elgio
Translation: Peppercorn
Cleaning: TzMarko

Author: Kurumada Masami

FLIGHT TWO: THUNDERBALL

HOME RUN! IT'S OUTTA THE BALL PARK!!
JUST KEPT GOING AND...
NO WAY! THE BALL THAT FLEW RIGHT AT THE PITCHER'S FACE...
THERE IT IS!
MR. RYUGO'S KILLER BATTING TECHNIQUE!
HEH, YOU JUST WITNESSED I...
RYUGO OUKI'S ULTIMATE PITCHER COUNTER-TECHNIQUE: SIDEWINDER!
Killers


YOU'RE ALL SO ANNOYING! BASEBALL IS ALL ABOUT WINNING OR LOSING!
THE FIELD IS A BATTLEGROUND, AND YOUR WEAK COMMENTS DON'T BELONG HERE!

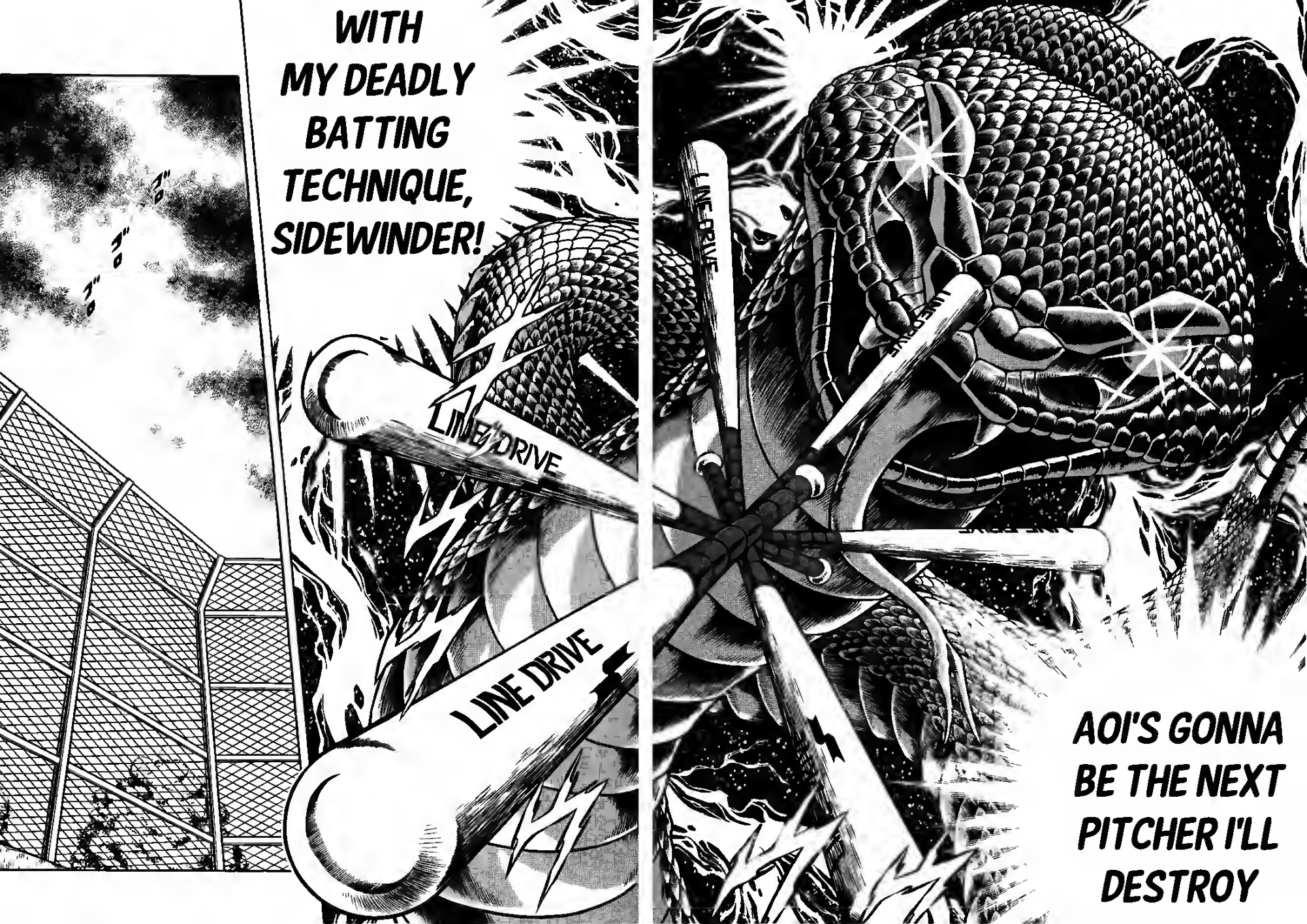
YOU KNOW WHAT THEY SAY ABOUT YOU? I HEAR THAT RYUGO OUKI NEVER PLAYS FAIR, AND WINS BY SMASHING THE OPPOSING PITCHER!
THAT WAS DIRTY, OUKI! YOUR BATTING IS ALWAYS AIMED BACK AT THE PITCHER! DON'T THINK I HAVEN'T NOTICED!
WHAT-EVER.
SO IT'S TRUE THAT YOU'VE INJURED SOME PLAYERS SO BADLY, THEY WEREN'T ABLE TO PLAY BASEBALL EVER AGAIN?

WHOEVER PITCHES AGAINST ME IS GONNA COUGH UP BLOOD! THAT'S THE MOTTO OF ME, RYUGO OUKI'S
I DON'T CARE IF THE PITCHER I'M BATTING AGAINST IS A MAJOR LEAGUE PLAYER.

THE MAN WHO STRUCK OUT PRODIGY BATTER SHINGO OUKI...
MY BIG BROTHER!

ALL THE JUNIOR TEAMS IN THE SHIZUOKA AREA ARE TOO SCARED TO PLAY A GAME AGAINST US.
HEH-HEH...SO, MR. RYUGO, WHICH TEAM WILL BE OUR NEXT OPPO-NENT?

AOI?
WHO'S HE?
OUR NEXT OPPONENT IS KANA-GAWA'S AOI.


WITH MY DEADLY BATTING TECHNIQUE, SIDEWINDER!
LINE DRIVE
LINE DRIVE
LINE DRIVE
AOI'S GONNA BE THE NEXT PITCHER I'LL DESTROY

OKAY, AI. LET'S CALL IT QUITS FOR TODAY! IT LOOKS LIKE IT'S ABOUT TO RAIN TOO.
AWW. CAN'T WE PRACTICE YOUR DIFFERENT PITCHING GRIPS SOME MORE, AOI?
I'M...I'M OKAY. I THINK I'M JUST CATCHING A COLD OR SOMETHING.
BUT, YOU'RE SWEATING PRETTY HARD. ARE YOU FEELING ALRIGHT?

AND, THIS FINGER GOES HERE.... AND MY MIDDLE FINGER GOES...
SO, I GRIP THE BALL LIKE THIS...

THE FORKBALL, HUH....
YOU'RE FINALLY GETTING THE HANG OF THROWING A FORKBALL! WHY NOT WORK ON IT SOME MORE AND PERFECT IT?

OOPS! AGH! THIS IS SO FRUSTRATING!

IF YOU ONLY USE ONE TYPE OF PITCH, IT'S BOUND TO GET HIT ONCE SOMEONE READS YOUR TIMING! SO...
THAT'S NOT TRUE. I'M ALWAYS TELLING YOU, IT'S NOT A MATTER OF POWER.
A REAL MAN PITCHES A FASTBALL, DEAD CENTER, AND THAT'S ALL I NEED!
FINE, I GET IT. "BASEBALL IS A MENTAL GAME." YOU PROBABLY READ THAT IN ALOT OF YOUR BOOKS, RIGHT?
USING DIFFERENT PITCHES IS JUST A CHEAP WIN! IT DOESN'T FIT MY STYLE.
HAH HAH HAH HAH!
SORRY, I SOUND REALLY GULLIBLE, DON'T I?
Y..YES...
PRACTICING FORKBALLS? WITH THOSE STUBBY FINGERS? YOU'VE GOTTA BE KIDDING ME.
DON'T MAKE ME LAUGH. THEY COULD PRACTICE FOR A LIFETIME, AND STILL NOT STAND A CHANCE AGAINST US. HEHEHEHE.
STUDYING'S NOT MY FORTE, SO YOU STUDY UP WHAT I NEED TO KNOW AND LEAD ME, ALRIGHT?
NO PROBLEM.
YEAH.
THAT'S YOUR ROLE AS MY CATCHER, MY RIGHT-HAND MAN!

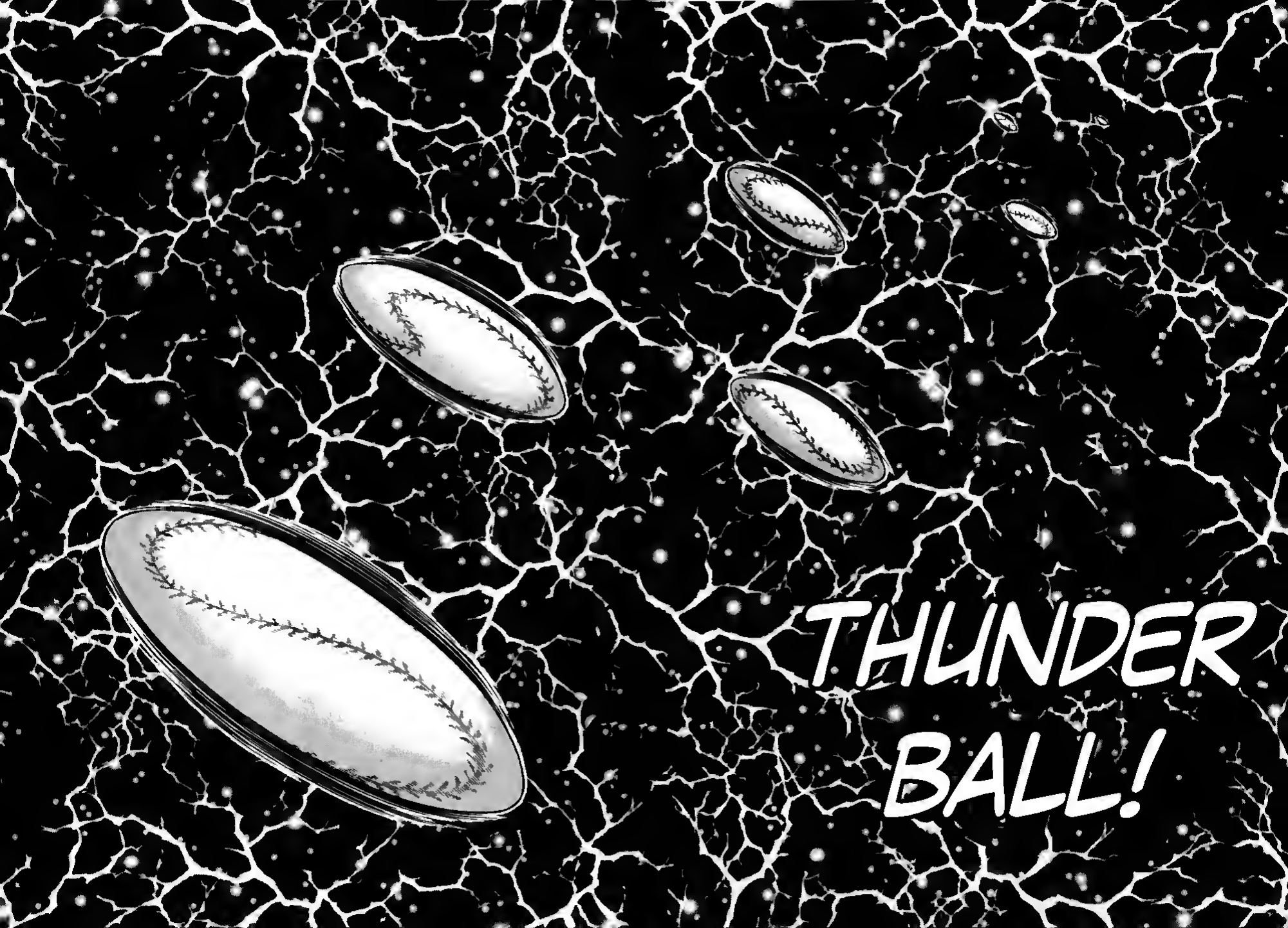
I WAS WONDERING WHAT KIND OF PLAYER HE'D BE, BUT THEY'RE JUST SOME KIDS PLAYING CATCHBALL.
DID THOSE KIDS REALLY STRIKE OUT THAT PRODIGY, SHINGO OUKI?
LET'S GO.
Y-YES
I GUESS THE RUMORS WEREN'T TRUE AFTER ALL. THAT KID ISN'T WORTH MY TIME TO SMASH.
THAT SOUNDS GOOD. I DON'T KNOW, BUT IT LOOKS LIKE IT'S ABOUT TO STORM OR SOMETHING.
HERE IT COMES, AI!
I'M READY, AOI!
DAMN! FORKBALLS ARE HARD TO THROW AS IS,
BUT MY FINGERS KEEP SLIPPING FROM THE SWEAT.
HE HE HE
BE THANKFUL WE SPARED YOUR LIVES. SEE YA!

ゥカカ

AOI!
A-AI!
THAT IS-!
WHAT THE HELL?!

UGH!
WHAT'S GOING ON?
AA AH!
WHAT HAPPE-NED?
IT...IT WAS LIKE...
I...I CAN'T BELIEVE IT! I CAN'T BELIEVE HE JUST THREW THAT...I DIDN'T EVEN THINK THAT KIND OF PITCH WAS POSSIBLE
WHAT?!
DID YOU SAY HE JUST THREW A LIGHTENING BOLT?!
AAA HH !!

WHAT JUST HA-PPENED?
HANG IN THERE, AI!
A-AOI ...
HUH?
OUCH..
A-AI!
ARE YOU ALRIGHT?!
A MIRACLE BALL..?
YOU JUST THREW A MIRACLE BALL...
A.A MIRACLE -
A MIRACLE BALL, FLYING OUT OF THE LIGHTENING...
YES... I SAW IT WITH MY OWN EYES...


THUNDER
BALL!

THE NAME'S OUKI, RYUGO OUKI.
WHO THE HELL ARE YOU?
THAT THUNDERBALL OF YOURS SOUNDS LIKE A LOTTA FUN!
WHAT?
..AS IN THE PRODIGY BATTER, SHINGO OUKI?
OUKI?
I'M HERE TO CHA-LLENGE YOU TO A DUEL, THAT'S ALL.
IT'S GOT NOTHING TO DO WITH MY OLDER BROTHER.
HEY, THAT'S DAN-GEROUS!
AH!
I'LL TAKE YOU UP ON THAT CHA-LLENGE, YOU-!
YOU JERK, PUSHING IN FROM NOWHERE!

THE RAIN'S GETTING WORSE. LET'S GO BACK, AOI.
HERE'S YOUR GLOVE.
OH, RIGHT.
AH?!
WE DECLINE.
WE'RE NOT PLANNING TO PLAY ANY GAMES AGAINST ANYONE ANYTIME SOON.
I'M NOT HERE TO PLAY AGAINST YOU IN A BASEBALL GAME. YOU GUYS AREN'T EVEN PART OF A REAL TEAM.
HEH, WHO SAID ANYTHING ABOUT PLA-YING
I TOLD YOU, I'M HERE TO CHA-LLENGE YOU TO A DUEL, BATTER VERSUS PITCHER.
AND LIKE I CARE ABOUT YOUR 'SIDEWIN-DER'!
WHAT DID YOU JUST SAY? YOU'RE JUST A KID TOO!
LITTLE BOY?
OR ARE YOU TOO SCARED YOU'RE GONNA GET KILLED BY MY SIDEWINDER ON THE PITCHER'S MOUND,

I'LL STRIKE HIM OUT IN NO TIME, AND SEND HIS SORRY FACE CRYING BACK HOME!
LET ME DO IT! AFTER ALL THAT JERK SAID, AS A MAN, I CAN'T BACK DOWN NOW!
I'LL ACCEPT YOUR CHALLENGE! GO GET READY!
DON'T DO IT, AOI!
AI!
HUH?
O-OKAY. THANK YOU...
YOU'RE CHILLED TO THE BONE FROM THE RAIN! COME ON, WE HAVE TO GO BACK!
HERE, TAKE MY ARM.
OH!
WHAT'S WRONG, AI?
I...I'LL BE OKAY. I JUST GOT A LITTLE DIZZY, THAT'S ALL...
YOU'VE GOT A BAD FEVER!

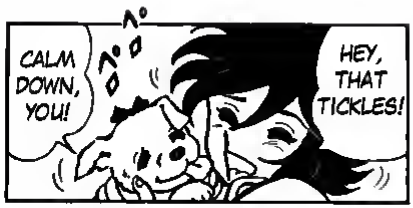
I'LL DECLINE YOUR CHALLENGE, RYUGO OUKI.
CAN'T BELIEVE THIS HAPPENED...
MR. RYUGO...
ARE YOU OKAY WITH THIS?
HE.
THERE'S NO POINT IN A CHALLENGE WHEN YOUR OPPONENTS ARE ALREADY WORN OUT.
I SWEAR!
BUT I SWEAR, AOI, ONE DAY I'LL DRAG YOU OUT ON TO THE MOUND!

AOI...DON'T LET RYUGO OUKI PROVOKE YOU!
AI...
HANG IN THERE, AI. WE'RE ALMOST AT YOUR HOUSE.
OKAY... THANK YOU...

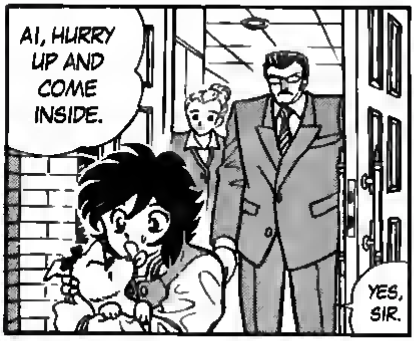
KILLED A PITCHER?
APPARENTLY, HE'S A BATTER KNOWN FOR KILLING A PITCHER BACK IN SHIZUOKA.

NO ONE CAN ESCAPE FROM IT... SIDEWINDER IS A DEADLY BATTING TECHNIQUE GUARANTEED TO KILL ANY
YES...HE USES A TERRIFYING BATTING TECHNIQUE CALLED "SIDEWINDER" THAT LAUNCHES THE BALL STRAIGHT BACK INTO THE PITCHER BEFORE FLYING OUT THE STADIUM FOR A HOMERUN.
Killers

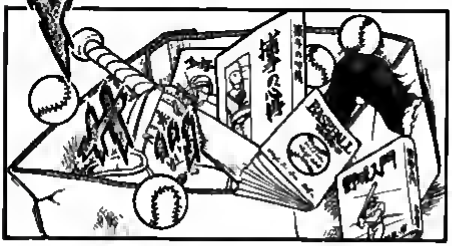
AI...
OUR GOAL AND OUR FUTURE IS MUCH HIGHER THAN THAT, SO...
SO, DON'T EVER ACCEPT HIS CHALLENGES!
WHAT RYUGO OUKI PLAYS ISN'T BASEBALL AT ALL, HE'S JUST PICKING A FIGHT!
I UNDERSTAND, AI.
SO, YOU CAN'T RISK FIGHTING AGAINST RYUGO! WHAT IF YOU GET INJURED?
YOU'RE THE ONLY PERSON IN THE WORLD WHO CAN CATCH MY PITCHES. WE'RE NOT GOING TO MAKE IT TO KOSHIEN IF YOU'RE NOT WELL EITHER.
I PROMISE, SO DON'T WORRY ANYMORE. TAKE IT EASY FOR TWO OR THREE WEEKS, AND GET LOTS OF REST.
THAT WAS YOUR OLDER BROTHER'S DREAM, AND IT'S OURS AS WELL.
LET'S MAKE IT TO KOSHIEN, AND THEN WIN.
OVER THERE, CERTAINLY THERE IS A BLUE BIRD CALLED HAPPINESS WAITING FOR US...
WE PROMISED IT, RIGHT?
WE CAN DO IT, AO!!
YEAH!
OUR THUNDERBALL!
AND LET'S PERFECT OUR NEW TECHNIQUE AS FAST AS WE CAN!

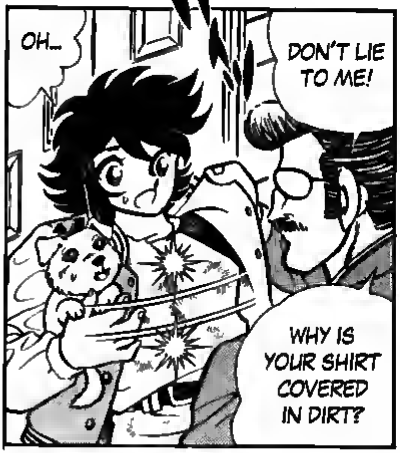

CALM DOWN, YOU!
HEY, THAT TICKLES!

SHH! YOU HAVE TO BE QUIET! I NEED TO SNEAK BACK INTO MY ROOM BEFORE FATHER NOTICES...
I'M HOME, RUN!
RUN

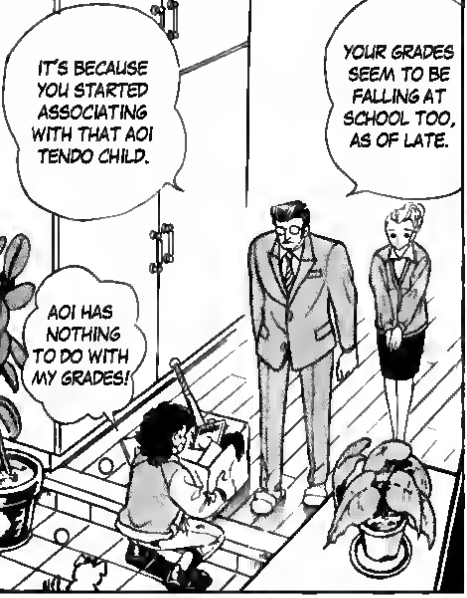

AI, HURRY UP AND COME INSIDE.
YES, SIR.

I...I WAS AT THE LIBRARY, AND LOST TRACK OF TIME...
WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN? WHAT HAVE YOU BE DOING ALL THIS TIME?


BASEBALL


OH...
DON'T LIE TO ME!
WHY IS YOUR SHIRT COVERED IN DIRT?

FATHER, HOW COULD YOU?
WE ALREADY KNOW YOU'VE BEEN SECRETLY PLAYING BASEBALL.

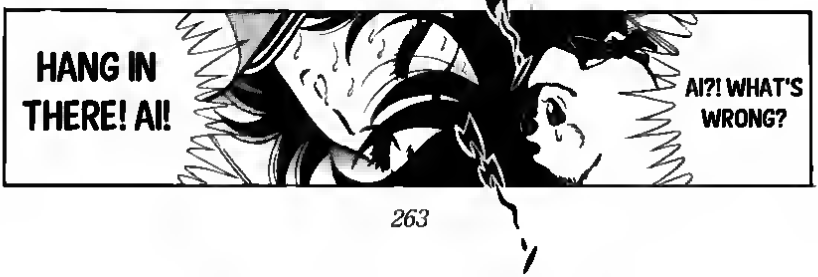

IT'S BECAUSE YOU STARTED ASSOCIATING WITH THAT AOI TENDO CHILD.
YOUR GRADES SEEM TO BE FALLING AT SCHOOL TOO, AS OF LATE.
AOI HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH MY GRADES!

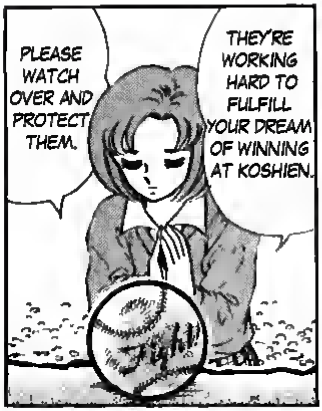
BE QUIET, AI.
THESE ARE IMPORTANT TO ME! YOU WENT THROUGH MY ROOM WITHOUT TELLING ME?

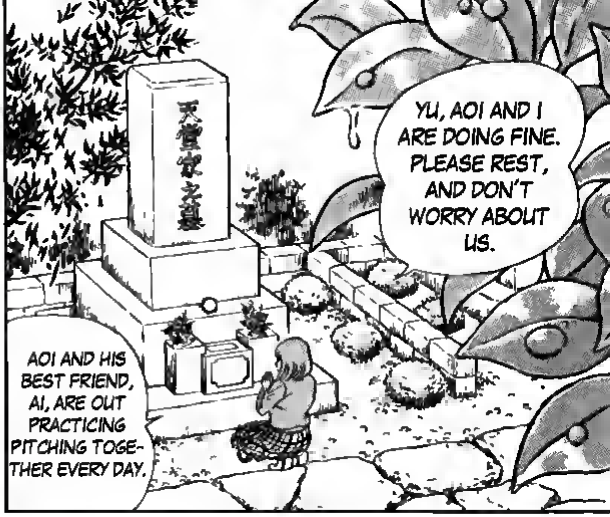
AND THAT INCLUDES BASEBALL AND OTHER VIOLENT SPORTS.
HAVEN'T YOU KNOW SINCE YOU WERE A CHILD THAT YOU SHOULDN'T DO EXTREME EXERCISES?

FATHER --
F...

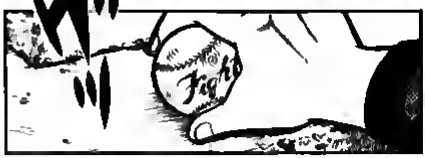
YOU CAN'T DO THAT! FATHER, PLEASE WAIT!
ANYWAYS, FROM THIS DAY FORTH, YOU'RE NEVER TO PLAY BASEBALL AGAIN. I ALSO FORBID YOU FROM MEETING WITH AOI.


HANG IN THERE! AI!
AI?! WHAT'S WRONG?


PLEASE WATCH OVER AND PROTECT THEM.
THEY'RE WORKING HARD TO FULFILL YOUR DREAM OF WINNING AT KOSHIEN.


YU, AOI AND I ARE DOING FINE. PLEASE REST, AND DON'T WORRY ABOUT US.
AOI AND HIS BEST FRIEND, AI, ARE OUT PRACTICING PITCHING TOGETHER EVERY DAY.

HEY!



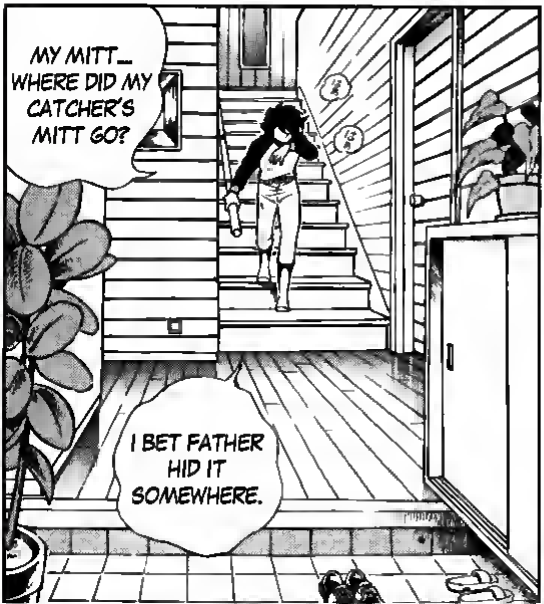
PLEASE GIVE THAT BACK! THAT BASEBALL IS IMPORTANT TO ME!
WHO ARE YOU?

SO THIS BASEBALL IS THE MEMENTO YU TENDO LEFT BEHIND. YU TENDO, THE PITCHER THAT AMAZED MY BROTHER AT KOSHIEN SO MUCH.
SO YOU ARE MR. OUKI'S...
BROTHER?
STOP IT!
WH-WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING?!
SO HE'S THE OLDER BROTHER OF THAT KID WHO RAN AWAY FROM MY CHALLENGE. HEH, I HAVE AN IDEA THAT'S MORE FITTING FOR THE GRAVE OF SOMEONE WHO'S YOUNGER BROTHER'S A COMPLETE COWARD!
TAKE THIS! SIDEWINDER!
AAAAA AAAAH!!

BUT, WHY DO I FEEL SO UNEASY?
I GUESS IT WAS JUST A BAD DREAM.
COULD SOMETHING HAVE HAPPENED TO AOI?

AH!

AOI'S GOING TO CHALLENGE RYUGO!
NO, THAT HAS TO BE IT.


MY MITT... WHERE DID MY CATCHER'S MITT GO?
I BET FATHER HID IT SOMEWHERE.

NO, I CAN'T LET THAT HAPPEN.
IF THOSE TWO FACE OFF AGAINST EACH OTHER, IT'S NOT GOING TO END SAFELY FOR EITHER OF THEM!

I...I NEED TO FIND THEM...

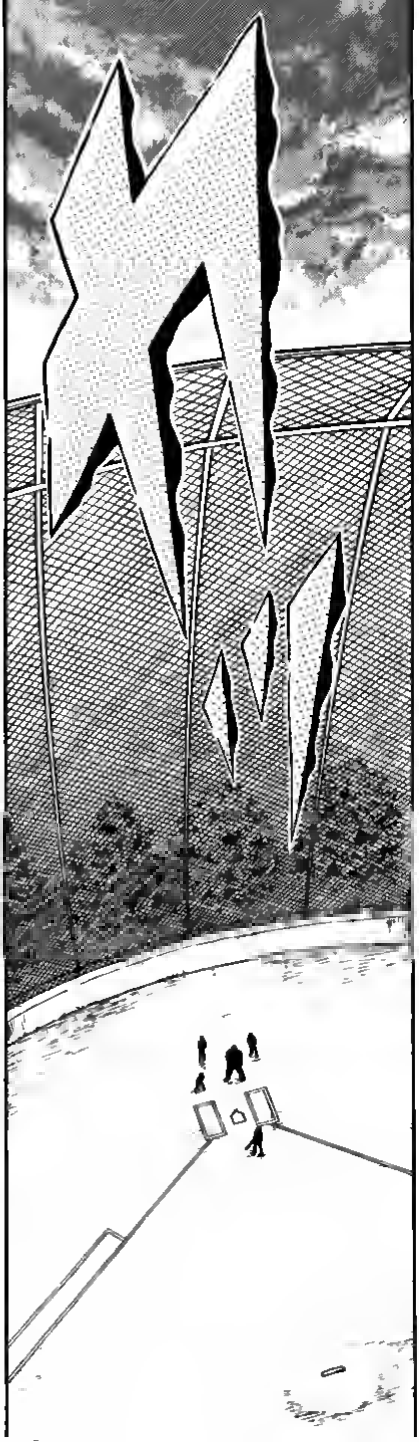
IT LOOKS LIKE JUST LIKE A BAD COLD FOR NOW. HE SHOULD RECOVER WITH SOME BEDREST.
THIS WAS A VERY CLOSE CALL. A LITTLE LATER, AND IT COULD HAVE BECOME PNEUMONIA.
RUN!
AS I THOUGHT, DOCTOR_ AI-
WE'RE VERY SORRY. WE'RE VERY STRICT WITH HIM REGARDING HIS HEALTH BUT...
AS ALWAYS, PLEASE BE CAREFUL ABOUT HIS HEALTH.
BUT, WHAT WORRIES ME MORE IS THE ILLNESS AI HAS HAD SINCE HE WAS YOUNG.
I AM VERY SORRY TO SAY THIS BUT...
A COLD COULD RESULT IN FATAL COMPLICATIONS.
AI ONLY HAS ONE YEAR LEFT TO LIVE.

ARE YOU OKAY, YURIE? YOU'RE NOT HURT, ARE YOU?
I-I'M FINE. BUT...YU'S GRAVE... IT'S...
THIS TIME, THIS BALL IS GONNA BASH YOU TO BITS!
DAMN YOU, RYUGO!

YOU THINK AOI TENDO'S GONNA SHOW UP?
OF COURSE, HE'LL COME.
BUT, TO GO ALL THE WAY AND BREAK HIS BROTHER'S HEADSTONE? ISN'T THAT A BIT TOO FAR...?

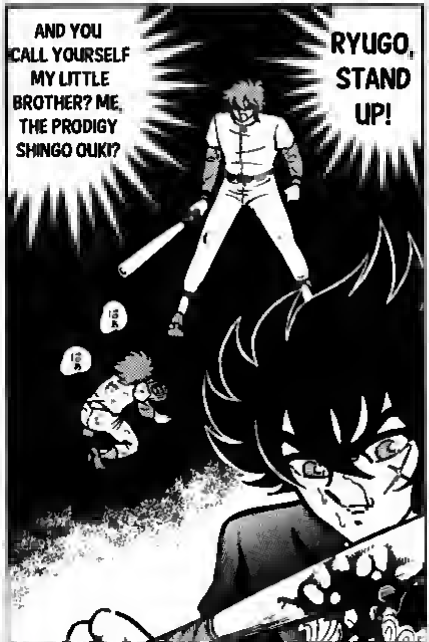
UH?
IT'S JUST THAT YOUR ACTIONS COULD HURT YOUR OLDER BROTHER'S REPUTATION...

IT'S OBVIOUS HE'S GOING TO WIN ROOKIE-OF-THE-YEAR, AND THEY'RE EVEN SAYING HE'S GUARANTEED TO WIN THE TRIPLE CROWN TOO. HE'S A GENIUS AMONG BATTERS.
OH YEAH, YOUR BROTHER IS THE PLAYER WHO JOINED THE GIANTS THIS YEAR, WAS NOT HE? SHINGO OUKI, RIGHT?
HE'S ON A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT LEVEL THAN US. WE DON'T STAND A CHANCE AGAINST A GENIUS LIKE THAT. EVEN MR RYUGO-!



GAH!
YOU'RE PISSING ME OFF! I THOUGHT I TOLD YOU NOT TO TALK ABOUT MY BROTHER!

YOU WANT REVENGE ..?
UHH?


AND YOU CALL YOURSELF MY LITTLE BROTHER? ME, THE PRODIGY SHINGO OUKI?
RYUGO, STAND UP!

I STARTED BASEBALL OUT OF SPITE SO I COULD SMEAR MY BROTHER'S NAME!
SO WHAT IF I HURT MY BROTHER'S REPUTATION?
THAT'S MY REVENGE AGAINST HIM!

EVEN IF YOU DIE, YOU'RE NOT RESTING UNTIL YOU CATCH 300 MORE BALLS!
AHH!
TOUGHEN UP! JUST BECAUSE YOU MIGHT HAVE A LITTLE FEVER DOESN'T MEAN YOU'RE GETTING OUT OF THE 1000 BAT KNOCK!
BIG BROTHER... I CAN'T SEE... MY EYES ARE TOO DIZZY...
F YOU WANT TO CALL YOURSELF MY YOUNGER BROTHER, YOU'RE NEVER TO LOSE TO ANYONE!
LISTEN UP! BASEBALL IS A BATTLE, MAN VERSUS MAN!
GAH!
GAH!

GET UP!
GET UP, RYUGO!
HEH... I FINALLY UNDERSTAND NOW WHY I HAD TO ENDURE SUCH SUFFERING
IN MY BASEBALL TRAINING EVERY DAY.

AGH!

WHY...?
BIG BROTHER -

IT WOULD HURT HIS IMAGE AS A BASEBALL PRODIGY IF HIS YOUNGER BROTHER WAS TOO ORDINARY.
IT WAS ALL TO INFLATE MY BROTHER'S EGO.

I'LL BEAT EVERY OPPONENT THAT COMES ACROSS ME TO BITS!
JUST YOU WAIT, AND SEE HOW MY DIRTY BATTING TECHNIQUES ARE GONNA MUDDY YOUR NAME!

SOCIETY ALWAYS ASSUMES THAT A GENIUS'S YOUNGER BROTHER SHOULD BE A GENIUS AS WELL.

I DIDN'T EVEN WANT TO PLAY BASEBALL. THAT'S WHY, I CAN'T AFFORD TO LOSE TO
AS A RESULT, I HAD BASEBALL BEATEN INTO ME BY MY "GENIUS BROTHER" UNTIL I THOUGHT I WOULD DIE.

HE'S HERE!
UH?
THE ONLY THING YOU'LL EVER BEAT TO BITS IS TOFU!
DON'T MAKE ME LAUGH!
RYUGO, YOU BASTARD. YOU'VE MADE A TERRIBLE MISTAKE.
YOU CAN BEAT ME ALL YOU WANT, BUT SMASHING MY BROTHER'S GRAVE? I'LL NEVER FORGIVE YOU FOR THAT.
HEH.
COME AT ME, RYUGO! I'M READY!
JUST LIKE YOU WANTED, I'LL FIGHT YOU AND YOUR UNDER-HANDED BATTING, AND TAKE YOU DOWN!

CAN'T BE HELPED. I'LL LET YOU BORROW OUR CATCHER THEN. HEY, SAKATA!
...YES, SIR.
STILL SICK WITH A LITTLE COLD?
YOU'RE READY? BUT WHERE'S YOUR PARTNER?
LINEDRIVE
WHAT?
GET OUTTA THE WAY, YOU BIG OAF.
SUIT YOURSELF. JUST DON'T BLAME ME IF YOU DIE.
HERE IT COMES.
GET OUT OF THE WAY IF YOU DON'T WANT TO GET HURT.
THERE'S ONLY ONE PERSON IN THE WORLD WHO CAN CATCH MY PITCHES.
I'VE BEEN A CATCHER FOR PRO PITCHERS. IF A GIRLY KID LIKE THAT CAN CATCH THEM, I CAN CATCH YOUR PITCHES WITH MY BARE HANDS!
YOU'RE JOKING, RIGHT? DO YOU KNOW WHO YOU'RE TALKING TO, KID?

KEEP YOUR EYE ON THE BALL, RYUGO!
HERE'S THE MIRACLE BALL YOU'VE CHALLENGED!
THUNDER-BALL!!
WHAT?
AH!
UH?

WHERE DO YOU THINK YOU'RE THROWING? THE BATTER IS THIS WAY
HA, HA, HA...
...HUH?!
IT'S A NEW PITCH, SO MY FINGER'S SLIPPED, THAT'S ALL.
SH-SHUT UP! I KNOW!
THUNDER BALL!
NOW, THIS TIME'S FOR REAL!
THAT WAS CLOSE!
WHOA!
AH!

THAT'S NOT A MIRACLE BALL! YOU'RE JUST THROWING BALLS OUT OF CONTROL!
AND YOU CALL YOURSELF A PITCHER?
IT JUST NEEDS SOME MORE WORK!
SHUT UP! IT'S A NEW PITCH!
YOU'RE NOT PLANNING TO END OUR DUEL WITH A JACKASS MOVE LIKE A FOUL BALL, NOW ARE YOU?
HEY, AOI. THIS IS YOUR FINAL CHANCE.
EH?
AI....DAMN IT! IF ONLY AI WAS HERE....
AI DEFINETELY SAID THAT HE SAW IT.
NO... THAT CAN'T BE IT.
MAYBE I JUST IMAGINED THUNDERBALL AFTER ALL....

DAMN IT! FASTBALLS ARE THE ONLY THING I HAVE LEFT!
GROVEL IN THE DIRT, AND MAYBE WE'LL LET YOU OFF EASY! HEHE HEHEHE!
WHAT'S WRONG, PITCHER? GIVE UP?
I DON'T KNOW WHERE THIS KID'S GONNA THROW NEXT! HAA-HAHAHA!
HEY, BE CAREFUL GUYS!
HUH?!
PLAYTIME IS OVER!
SAKATA! WATCH OUT!
WHAT?

OH!
AH?!
N..
NO WAY!
THAT'S IMPO-SSIBLE!
GAA AAA AAA AH!!
I TOLD YOU I DIDN'T NEED YOUR CATCHER.
HEH!
S-SO, IT'S TRUE.. HE WAS THE ONE THAT STRUCK OUT MY BROTHER AFTER ALL. SO THE RUMORS ABOUT YOU AND YOUR FASTBALL WERE TRUE, AOI TENDO!

ME? SWING TOO LATE?
TH-THIS IS IMPOS-SIBLE!

AH!!

LISTEN UP. THE NEXT ONE'S GONNA BE ANOTHER ONE, STRAIGHT AT YOU...
THAT MAKES THE SCORE 2-3.

DON'T THINK I'LL LOSE THAT EASILY!
WHO DO YOU THINK I AM?

AND YOU'RE GONNA LOSE!!

GYAA AAH!

GYAA AAH!

NO...GET SOME BANDAGES FIRST TO STOP THE BLEEDING!
THE SKIN'S JUST BEEN RUBBED OFF! SOMEONE GET A DOCTOR!
MR. RYUGO! YOUR HANDS, THEY'RE BLEEDING!

HURRY UP, AND GET A FIRST AID KIT! THE VIBRATIONS HITTING A FOUL TIP HURT HIS HANDS PRETTY BADLY. THEY'RE NOT GOING TO BE OF MUCH USE FOR A WHILE
DON'T JUST STAND THERE!
UUHH...

RYUGO?

AND A METAL BAT.
GET ME SOME BANDAGES..

はあ
はあ
はあ
OUR FIGHT ISN'T OVER YET... THE SCORE IS STILL 2-3.
WITH THIS, I DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT SHATTERING MY BAT. COME AT ME, AOI!
BY TYING YOUR HANDS TO THE BAT, THE NEXT THING THAT'S GONNA SHATTER ARE YOUR TWO ARMS, RYUGO.
I'VE GOT YOUR TIMING NOW, AOI. I SWEAR, YOUR NEXT PITCH IS GONNA GO FLYING.
TAKE THIS!
I'D LIKE TO SEE YOU TRY!
HUH?!
AAAA AAA AGH!!

C...COME ON... HURRY UP AND PITCH... I'LL HIT IT FOR SURE...
HE... HE ACTUALLY HIT IT...
IT'S GOING LONG!
BUT IT'S A FOUL. SO CLOSE!
ALMOST GOT YOUR TIMING!
ARGH!
ALL RIGHT!
VICTORY IS MINE !

SIDE-WINDER!
GO! GO! NEXT ONE'S A HOMERUN!

AFTER IT SMASHES YOUR FACE, IT'S FLYING RIGHT OUT OF THE FIELD.
HEH, I'VE GOT YOUR TIMING NOW, AOI. NEXT ONE'S COMING STRAIGHT BACK AT YA.

NO... FOUL AGAIN!
A LITTLE MORE, AND IT'D BE A HOMERUN!
BUT THE BALL IS GETTING CLOSER TO THE POLE!

THIS TIME, HE'LL HIT IT FOR SURE!
IT'S TRUE... RYUGO'S SWINGS ARE GETTING MORE ACCURATE EACH TIME.

WHAT?!
OH!

RYUGO?!

AI!
I CAN'T SEE STRAIGHT... I'VE GOTTEN SO CLOSE! JUST... ONE MORE PITCH...
D-DAMN... MY HANDS... THE PAIN'S STARTING TO GET TO ME...
UH?
IT'LL HURT LESS IF I RETIE THEM.
HERE, LET ME RETIE THESE BANDAGES. THEY'RE AGITATING YOUR INJURIES THE WAY THEY ARE NOW
Y...YOU AGAIN...
STOP BEING STUBBORN! YOU CAN'T FINISH YOUR DUEL WITH AOI LIKE THIS, NOW CAN YOU?
OW!
DON'T TOUCH ME! AS IF I'D ACCEPT HELP FROM THE ENEMY!
YOU...

HEY, AI! ARE YOU FEELING ALRIGHT NOW?
I'M GLAD IT WORKED. NOW YOU CAN BAT ONE MORE TIME.
UH?!
I WAS VERY SICKLY AS A CHILD, SO I WAS HOSPITALIZED OFTEN. I GUESS I JUST LEARNED NATURALLY FROM OBSERVING THE NURSES ALL THE TIME.
I...I CAN'T BELIEVE IT. THE PAIN IS ALMOST GONE.
A... AI...
I'M DISAPPOINTED IN YOU.
AOI! YOU BROKE OUR PROMISE TO NEVER FIGHT AGAINST RYUGO.
IT'S BECAUSE YOU KEP TRYING TO THROW THE THUNDERBALL BEFORE FULLY DEVELOPING IT.
JUST AS I SUSPECTED, YOUR LEFT ELBOW IS QUITE SWOLLEN
AOI, ONE MORE PITCH, AND YOU'LL BE AT YOUR LIMIT TOO.
AI...
OUCH! HEY!

MAKE YOUR BODY INTO A STRAIGHT LINE, POINTING STRAIGHT UP TO THE SKY. KEEP THAT IN MIND, AND TRY TO REMEMBER.
WHEN YOU THREW THE THUNDERBALL, YOU THREW IT LIKE A FORKBALL, BUT WITH A FEW CHANGES.WHEN YOU WIND-UP, SWING YOUR LEG UP STRAIGHTER AND HIGHER THAN USUAL.
A... AI...

TIME FOR THUNDER-BALL!
I'M READY, AOI!
LISTEN UP YOU TWO! OUR LAST PITCH WILL BE THUNDER-BALL, AND THE DUEL IS DONE.
WHOEVER WINS, THEY WILL BE NO GRUDGES AF-TERWARDS. IS THAT CLEAR?

THUN-
DER!
ROAR OUT
LOUDER!
TO THE
HEAVENS!
TO THE
EARTH!
MAKE THE
HEAVENS,
THE EARTH,
AND YOUR
BODY AS ONE!
REMEMBER THE
STANCE, AS IF YOU
ARE TRYING TO GATHER
ALL OF THE LIGHTNING
FROM THE SKY INTO
YOUR BODY ONCE
MORE!
A~LL RIGHT!
LET'S FIND OUT IF
THE THUNDERBALL
REALLY DID
APPEAR OUT OF
A LIGHTNING
BOLT OR NOT!
HERE IT
COMES,
AI!
IF YOUR
THUNDER-
BALL IS
REAL,, I'LL
HIT IT FOR
SURE!
WITH
SIDE-
WINDER!
YOU NEED
TO RAISE
YOUR LEG
HIGHER!
HIGHER,
AOI!

ROAR!
THUDER!

THUNDER-
BALL!!
IF IT'S A FORK-
BALL, MY BEST
CHANCE TO HIT
IT IS WHEN
IT DROPS!
VICTORY
IS MINE, AOI!
THUNDERBALL'S
BECOME
SIDEWINDER'S
PREY!
SO IT'S A
TYPE OF
FORKBALL,
AFTER ALL!
IT'S
DROP-
PING!

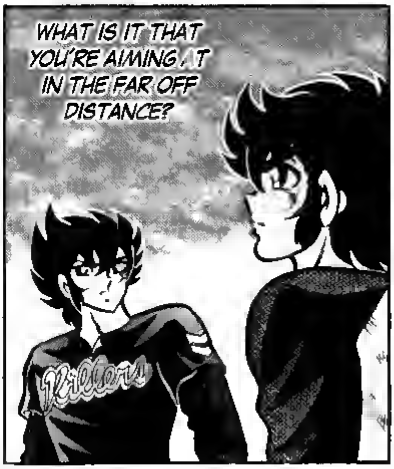
WHAT?!
THERE'S NO WAY! THE BALL JUST FLEW BACKWARDS!
IT'S THE THUNDER-BALL!
BALL!
YES! IT'S THE MIRACLE...
THIS IS-!
TH-
THE PITCH THAT WAS BORN OUT OF A LIGHTNING BOLT....

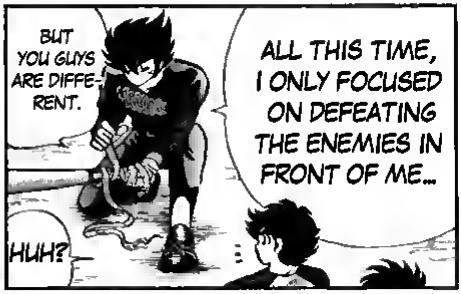
A MIRACLE BALL...
THAT BALL JUST BROKE ALL THE LAWS OFPHYSICS... HOW CAN THAT BE? IT REALLY IS..

I'VE LOST...FOR THE FIRST TIME...

WE DID IT, AI!
AOI!

A... AOI...
I EVEN GOT TO PERFECT MY THUNDERBALL, THANKS TO AI AND YOU.
HAT WAS A GOOD FIGHT, RYUGO.


WHAT IS IT THAT YOU'RE AIMING , T IN THE FAR OFF DISTANCE?


BUT YOU GUYS ARE DIFFE- RENT.
ALL THIS TIME, I ONLY FOCUSED ON DEFEATING THE ENEMIES IN FRONT OF ME...
HUH?

SOMETHING HIGHER...
YOU GUYS SEEM TO BE AIMING FOR SOMETHING FARTHER...

AND IN MY SHORT LIFE, I WILL FIND IT FOR SURE....
FATHER, MOTHER... I WANT TO LIVE THE DAYS I HAVE LEFT TO THE FULLEST...
THE BLUE BIRD THAT FLIES HIGH, FAR IN THE DISTANCE CALLED "THE FUTURE"...

TO THE BLUE BIRD...

BLUE MYTH

OVERTURE

Masami Kurumada Presents

THE END